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Subject: What is the Profit of Godliness?

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## SERMONS

, PREACHED BY

## HENRY WARD BEECHER.



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## AUTHORIZATION.

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## WHAT IS THE PROFIT OF GODLINESS?

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“For bodily exercise profiteth little; but godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

1 TIM. IV. 8.

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The apostle, writing to Timothy, who was the bishop of the Greek Church in Asia Minor, had his eyes upon the athletic drill and discipline which prevailed among the Greeks, and which was an important part of the education of their youth. Various games, and contests, success in which turned upon physical accomplishment, had led men to put upon them an unwarrantable estimate. And when the apostle says that “bodily exercise profiteth little” (or *a little while*, as the margin has it), he evidently refers to that physical culture which prevailed in Greece—to a degree, perhaps, which has never been equaled since.

“Godliness,” he says (as if it were something distinguished from this exterior development) “is profitable unto all things,—and for two reasons. It carries with it profit, prosperity, in the life that now is, as well as the promise and certainty of the life that is to come.”

That men, by godliness, should reap a fruition and harvest hereafter, is not surprising to those who have at all been instructed in religious things; but there are many who have supposed that godliness was in a man’s way here; that so far from being profitable in all things, it stood right in the path of those who would reap honors and worldly good. Yet, our text makes the declaration without exception, that it “is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.”

What is *godliness*? If it meant merely that a man has reverence, and that he prefers the appropriate duties of worship, there might seem very little reason for supposing that that would stand con-

nected with great prosperity in worldly things. It might be becoming, and worship might even be regarded as accomplished by it; but that simply being a worshiping creature should materially affect a man's worldly prosperity, does not appear so plain. I apprehend that *godliness* means a great deal more than that. It includes that; but godliness is conformity to the whole constitution of things which God has decreed and marked out. In other words, living according to nature (interpreting that word *nature* in its higher sense) is living according to God's law. He who conforms to the laws by which God has surrounded him in the natural world and in human society; he who is spiritually conformable to the divine law, and who is in all things living as far as he can according to the divine prescription, shall be prospered in the life that now is, as well as inherit the life that is to come. So that *godliness* means something more than merely *religion*, in the narrow and technical sense of the term. It means having a wise view of all the laws of our being and condition, and living in conformity to them.

Moreover, when it is said that it has in it "the promise of the life that now is," we are not to narrowly interpret it. We ought not to suppose that a man will be prospered in everything that he wants to prosper in, or that if a man unwise chooses a profession or walk in life, and seeks it from the mere fact of godliness, he will inherit success. For instance, if a man who has not one natural gift of the orator should seek celebrity and power by oratory, is it reasonable to suppose that he would succeed merely from the circumstance of his being godly? A man, with a clumsy hand, without skill, and without inventive thought, is not justified in attempting to be an inventor simply on the general ground of godliness. We are not to suppose that a man who has no commercial training is to plunge into business and make this plea: "I live in conformity to the laws of my being, and shall be prospered in my pursuits."

We are to have a larger idea of prosperity than is seen in any of these special things. For, although even where men are badly matched with their affairs, right living will make disaster more bearable and less mischievous; although the godly man will, with ill success, reap more and better things than the ungodly man with good success, yet, we must take a larger view of what success in life is, and of what godliness will do for men. That which, on the whole, promotes their greatest happiness, must be considered. Their prosperity now means their welfare. It does not consist in the development of any one part of their nature, but the whole of it.

Godliness has an immediate relation to that which is the foun-

dation of all enjoyment—a good, sound, bodily condition. What profits it that a man has art, beauty, symmetry,—an abundance of exquisite things about him, if he be blind? What profits it that a man is able to surround himself with delightful music, if he be deaf? What profits it if the dance goes on day and night in a man's halls, through the varying holidays, if he be laid up with rheumatism or gout, and cannot even move in his chair? What profits it that a man has stored in his mind learning—wonderful masses of learning—if his health be so broken down that his physician refuses him both book and thought? The condition of enjoyment in this life is, that one is in a sound state of bodily health. Godliness, or a conformity to the great laws of our condition, includes physical health—works toward it.

Moderation of appetite; restraint of undue desires; that quietness of spirit which comes from the belief in an overruling Providence; that undisturbed equilibrium which comes from faith in God—all these are, looking at them in their very lowest relations, elements of health—of a sound physical condition. The influences that undermine health—the dissipations, the gluttonies, the drunkennesses, the excessive pleasures which drain out, prematurely, the vitality of men—these are forbidden by a wise reference to the laws of our condition. And among the things which men at large who live godly lives will reap, and may expect to reap, is good, sound health, which is a grand constituent of all worldly prosperity.

Next consider how much a man's happiness in this life depends upon his disposition—both with reference to himself and with reference to his social surrounding. It is not what you have about you, but what you are, that determines how happy you shall be. If you are envious and jealous, you cannot be happy—not until bitter is sweet; not until black is white. If you have malign feelings uppermost, they will always be corrosive. Such feelings disqualify you for social enjoyment. Excessive pride takes away from the power of enjoyment. Excessive vanity takes away from the capacity of enjoying in this life. Overweening sensibility, whether it springs from selfishness, or from an unnatural development of nerve—whatever may be its source—acts to deprive men of their social enjoyment. How much you shall enjoy depends on how moderate you are in your demands. If you are of such a nature that you think the world was made for you; and that, though it does carry along a few other people, yet, in the main, it is kept up for you; and that God, on the whole, thinks more of you, or ought to, at any rate, than of all other beings—if, with this sovereign vanity and conceit, you are measuring what you have, or

what you ought to have, there will not be a day of the three hundred and sixty-five which will not seem stingy to you. Every hour that distils a dew-drop of mercy will seem to be cheating you of the floods of bounty which you ought to have. Some men spend so much time measuring what they deserve, and what they really have or have not, that they are never happy. Men who are not willing to be content with small measures of enjoyment; who are forever making the condition of their happiness lie before them; who never press out the clusters and drink the wine of their actual experience, but are always placing it far forward, and further forward—such men cannot be happy. They have dispositions which carry in them the essential vice that works toward misery and discontent.

Some man may say, "If I were not cribbed and confined as I am here, and if I had that man's means, would not I be happy?" Let his condition be changed. At night when he is asleep, put him in the circumstances of that man whom he envied. While the novelty lasted he might experience some pleasure; but no sooner would he get wonted to his new condition, than the same causes which wrought discontent in him in his former state would make him discontented still. You cannot make a discontented nature happy by covering it up with silks. You might wear a diamond ring on every finger, and a coronet on your head, and you might be the centre of admiration in your circle; but if you had not the quality of being happy in you, you would not be happy. You cannot, by the abundance of the things which he possesses, make a man happy.

Why, a child may put its hand on a harp that has been chorded and tuned, and music will come out of it; but a giant might smite against the body of an oak tree, and there would be no sound of music. There is no music in it. It is the quality of the thing struck that determines whether it is musical or not. The chords are in us, or nowhere. If you have not the nature in you which tends to the production of happiness, all the influences which you can bring to bear will not make you happy; pleasure will bring no melody; riches will bring no deep-seated joy; and honors and aspirations will yield no happiness.

Godliness, by its very nature, reduces a man to a certain conformity with the laws of his condition, and makes him content therein, and so works upon his disposition that it becomes amenable to the law of happiness. It is restrained in its overweening pride, or wide, circuiting vanity, or harrowing discontent. It is made to be more childlike and simple. It is brought into conditions in which happiness may distil upon it from ten thousand little things. A man

who wishes to see beauty in nature must not watch for it in gorgeous sunsets always—though they will come once in a while. Let him watch for it in ten million little facets which glisten in the light of the sun, by the roadside as well as in the rich man's adorned grounds. We must see it in the motes and bugs, in the minutest insects, everywhere.

So, then, we are to reap happiness and satisfaction, not so much from great cataclysms and paroxysms, as in little things, that have the power to make us supremely happy.

Another thing. Men's happiness depends more upon their relations to society than we are apt to think. Where men have the art of fitting themselves to their circumstances and their companions, there is great satisfaction in these also.

There is a true sympathy, a true benevolence, which is godly. It is the fruit of godliness. The not thinking of ourselves more highly than we ought to think, but thinking soberly, as God has dealt to every man the measure of faith; the giving-and-taking spirit; the art of saying pleasant things; the art of not saying disagreeable things; in other words, charity, that covers a multitude of sins, that rejoiceth not in iniquity, that rejoiceth in the truth, that heareth all things, that endureth all things, that is not puffed up, that doth not behave itself unseemly—this is a condition of great enjoyment. I think there is to be reaped from the face and heart of men great fruition, if one is only in such relations of sympathy with them as to avail himself of that fruition, which is open to all. Alas! there are many persons who do not know how to carry themselves among men; who are not interested in them; who, for the most part, look upon them as a carpenter looks upon a chest of tools—as cutting instruments, which he can use. If they cannot use them, they regard them as of no value at all. If when you look upon men you ask, "How much are they worth? What can I do with them? What use can I put them to?" If you go among men with a mean, selfish spirit, how little happiness will you find in your social intercourse! But if in the child and in its sports, you see something to make you smile; if toward the laboring man you have a kindly good will, and if you find companionship with all who are virtuous in the various walks of life—with those who are high for certain reasons, and those who are low for certain other reasons; if you feel a generous brotherhood and sympathy for men, then there is a vast deal of enjoyment for you in this life, which comes simply from your aptitudes for fellowship and friendship.

Now, it is the peculiar office of a true godliness to subdue the heart to this universal amnesty and sympathy, so that they who

are godly, who live in conformity to the will of God, in all their circumstances, shall reap more or less enjoyment. Godliness, by changing men's condition, prepares them to be happy; and by giving them affinities for things about them produces conditions of happiness.

There are also other ways in which godliness works toward happiness. It gives to men a motive in this life without concentrating on their worldly endeavors the utmost of their powers. No man can be happy in life without having some business that tasks him; for happiness means manhood. Quiescence brings no consciousness of enjoyment with it, though it may bring great profit. But no man has a business to which he applies himself assiduously, and which he sees succeeding, without enjoying himself. I do not know that there is any better enjoyment for a man than to have been mated to some vocation which suits his nature and disposition, to have heartily accepted it, and to make it the occasion, every day, of the activity of every part of his nature. The outgoing of a man's own self, legitimately and industriously, with the constant expectation of success—there is great enjoyment in this.

At the same time, let this enjoyment be coupled with the moderating, restraining feeling that if earthly enterprises fail and come short, this world is not the only refuge, and worldly affairs are not the only things of value—that though the house perish, and the garments be wasted, and the gold and silver take wings and fly away, and all things perish, yet there is a God, there is a providence, there is hope, there is a home, and there is immortality; then the happiness is greatly increased. If we work within the sphere of Christian faith in secular affairs, we reap a great degree of satisfaction in this life—more than most men are wont to reap from their outward circumstances.

Then there is the consideration of those qualities which go to make success in business. Now I come to that which men call "prosperity"—namely, succeeding in their affairs, not only so that they shall be able to sustain their families, but so that they shall be able to improve their condition, and be called "prosperous men."

Piety, especially in any narrow and technical sense of the term, does not necessarily make men good business men. A good business man is one who has good common sense. And common sense is a *born* quality. If it be not in you, I do not know how to help you. If one limb is shorter than another, we can splice out the shoe; but if a man is born without common sense, I do not know of any crutch or splice that will supply the lack. He must wiggle on the best he can. But the word of God, while it speaks of

"fools," of the "heedless," of the "unwise," and what not, in the main, takes it for granted that men have common sense, or addresses itself to men who possess this quality. It does not have much to say to your theology, or your metaphysics, but speaks mainly to your common sense.

When there is this root-force—good common sense—in men, then godliness—that is, self restraint—a wise conformity to all the known laws of their being—does tend to produce just those states of mind which in the end result in commercial prosperity.

In the first place it gives a man trustworthiness—a quality which is as rare as the gold of Ophir. A man whose good judgment you can trust; whose honesty is sterling; who is just the same behind your back that he is before your face; who loves his neighbors' affairs as if they were his own; who does what he promises to do; who is faithful, and continuous in his fidelity; in short, who is trustworthy—the price of such a man is above rubies. Men in general, if you were to put them up at auction, might not bring much.

A drove of horses that came from South America the other day was exposed for sale in one of the open lots of the city. I went to look at them. They may have been all that they claimed to be, but such a scrawny set of skin and bone I never saw before. They were put up at auction, and brought small prices.

If men, as they go, in Wall Street, were put up at auction, I do not think they would bring much. Men are not much thought of, taking them as they average. A person would hesitate about bidding on them.

Let me have taken one of those horses, and put him in the trainer's hands, and had his speed brought out so that he could make his nine and ten miles an hour on the road, and then put him up at auction, and how many bidders would there have been! How many would have been glad to possess him, and would have been willing to pay a good price for him!

The trouble is that we do not believe in men. They are too apt to be one-sided. They are swayed by circumstances. They are assailable. They are forgetful. They are untrustworthy. But once let a man be known to be of good parts, and above suspicion or reproach or temptation, and there is no gold that can be weighed over against him.

Men talk about being honest and industrious, and yet never getting along in life. You put too high an estimate upon your honesty. Men do not believe you are as honest or as faithful and prompt as you believe yourself to be. But where all the parts

of a man are morally sound; when he is free from vices of every sort; where he has fidelity, conscientiousness, industry, good judgment and intelligence; where he is so trustworthy that you can bring the screw to bear upon him, and, though you turn it never so many times, not be able to break him until you crush him to death—he is invaluable. And I say that just in proportion as men approach to that, they are more and more important in a commercial age, and in a great commercial community.

Now, it is the tendency of the ethics of Christianity to produce just such men. If religion does not produce them, it is so far spurious or imperfectly administered. There is a difference between ethical religion and ecclesiastical and doctrinal religion. But where a man has Christian ethics; where a man is truth-speaking and reliable; where a man is founded upon the rock Christ Jesus, and cannot be moved from it, I say that godliness tends to success in commercial affairs. I need hardly point you to the fact that the classes from which the prosperous men of the community spring are not the wild living. The men who honor God in their households; the men whose children have been brought up to moderation of desire and to self-restraint; the men whose children have been taught weekdays and Sundays; the men who believe in God, and in responsibility to God, and are sober-minded, and have that depth of earnestness which comes with early teaching in religion—these are the men who furnish the successful lawyers and merchants and business men in every direction.

If you take the different classes of religionists, where shall you find more Christian ethics than among the Quakers? Where shall you find more carefulness in daily life? And among what class will you find more worldly prosperity, and more enjoyment in it, than among them?

When I lived in the West, a merchant told me that during twenty years he never suffered the loss of a quarter of a dollar from a whole Quaker neighborhood. You might take whole settlements, and say that they were exemplifications of the fact that “godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”

So I might go on and reason almost endlessly; but I should be met by many, saying, “While in a general way this may be true, it must be admitted that there are brilliant exceptions. Here is a man who sought ambition, and very soon flung off all competitors. They were too careful. They had conscience, and would not climb by the ways that he resorted to. But he, being bold and unscrupulous, climbed, and stands high.”

Oh, that you could take down that man who stands so high! The man who has risen in violation of all the commands of God, who has had some success in the way of a brilliant career in ambition, and who now wields power—take him down! Put his qualities in the alembic and analyze them; enter into an examination of his nature; look at what he is made up of; look at the mere matters of tendency and of enjoyment; see whether that harsh, severe, burning spirit of his is a prosperous spirit, simply because he has reached some lurid height, by his overweening ambition. Is he prosperous because he has reached the point that he wanted to reach? Is he happy? Does he bear the mark of enjoyment on his brow?

The saddest face that I ever looked upon, I think—the most heart-touching and tear-bringing—was that of Daniel Webster, as I sat and looked across at him, when he went home to die, a broken-hearted man—a wreck. He had staked everything for ambition. Virtue was not his besetting sin. Although he had a certain moral admiration, he never had deep moral impulse. He did not *believe*. He threw himself away upon his ambition, and failed. Although he had world-wide renown as an orator and statesman, the thing for which he strove he missed; and he went back disappointed, sinking down through step by step of stimulation, until death closed the sad and piteous scene. His was one of the saddest lives in American history. It would be looked upon by many as one of the most successful of lives, if a rewarded ambition could be regarded as being success. He had everything all the way up except the banble at the top which he sought. He longed to be President, but he could not be. The bubble was pricked, and he died. What sort of manhood is that which fails and loses everything because any one thing that a man sought in this large, round age, and set his heart upon, he could not have?

There is the eminent but not honored name of Fisk. Coming down into the city, he despised men, if he did not God. What cared he for morality? Where was his godliness. Was there ever a man who lived so fast, and did so much, and rose so high? Let me tell you, young men, that the success of that man did not depend upon his wickedness. The reason why he did succeed was that he was an exceedingly able business man. He had admirable qualities in him. He was sensuous in his habits; but in business matters he was both bold and cautious. He was, among his companions, a man whose word was to be trusted. He had uncommon adaptations. His success resulted from that which was good in him and not from those elements in him which were bad. The things that

were bad in him made his success less brilliant and less enjoyable. It was his vices that slew him. It was his real virtues that gave him his eminence. You are fools if you suppose that he succeeded because he was bad.

“Ah, but,” you say, “that may be the case with some men; but I do not believe there was ever a better man than such and such a one; and he was signally unsuccessful. If there was ever a godly man, he was one. He used to pray every morning, and distribute tracts every evening; he used to attend the prayer-meetings regularly, and participate in them; he used to do everything that a really godly man would be expected to do; he used to do all he could for the good of the community that he was in.”

All that may be true; but godliness does not teach a crow to sing like a nightingale. If a man has gone into a business which he is not fit for, he cannot make up what he lacks by taking part in prayer-meetings, or distributing tracts, or anything of that kind. A man must use his good sense in adapting himself to his business. He must select a business that he is competent to carry on. To choose wrongly in establishing one’s self in business is a violation of the law of success. A man may be qualified for one kind of life, and not for another. A man may make a good minister and a poor general; or, a man may make a good general and a poor minister. A man may make a good artist and a poor artisan or worker in metals. Men must avoid those spheres for which they have no aptitude. If a man attempts to prosper in a sphere for which he is not fitted, piety will help to supplement his weakness, but it will not crown him with commercial success.

And yet, many a man has failed utterly in business, and his life has been a better success than the life of his neighbors who never failed. I know such men.

If I had my choice, I would rather live in a hovel, with a joyous, genial, kind, cheerful companion, in one room, with all my little delf on one little shelf; one room, redolent every day with true enjoyment; one room, with the companionship of one on whom the morning came full of brightness and sweetness; one room, and good digestion; one room, with songs enlivening the day; one room, baptized by the influences of religion; one room, where God’s sweet angel of mercy has brought invisible gifts that never spend themselves—if I had my choice, I would rather live in one room in such a hut than in the resplendent mansion through which the prosperous man walks, and sees nothing that comforts him, and nothing that his eye delights to look upon.

Oh, that great, brilliant, marble house on the corner! Oh,

the gallery of pictures that stands behind it! Oh, the magnificent glass, crystal-cut, that lets the light through the windows—or would, if it were not for the splendid rags that are hung up inside! Oh the massive furniture! Oh, the gorgeous upholstery! And oh, the thin, stingy man who walks up and down in the midst of all this rich abundance! Would you change with him? I would rather trundle a wheelbarrow than be a curmudgeon in what men call “prosperity” in this world. Money in your pocket and hell in your heart do not make you prosperous. Reeking contempt, rapping selfishness, avarice that is vulgar and remorseless—is that prosperity? Is that what you want to live for? Was it for that that your dear mother brought you to the baptismal font? Was it for that that your father uttered prayers over your head every morning? Was it for that that there were well-springs of sentiment and aspiration opened when you came into life? Was it for that that you came down into life with full freight of anticipation? Was it to pile up money, and waste manhood? Does prosperity come in that way? You cannot have any prosperity that corrupts manhood. There is nothing prosperous which does not make you more than you are.

Although a man may fail in his outward work in life, yet, when you come to one who is called “a prosperous man,” you will find that, compared with him, the first is the more fortunate. Though his goods are gone, though he is wasted, though he can no longer look upon a large exchequer, and though his expectations are disappointed, yet, within he has sweet content. He has gratefulness toward God. He has a heart full of rebounds of sympathy. He has faith and hope of the future. He is waiting for his coronation. In that land where the gold shall never grow dim, nor lose its luster—there is his home. And even here he has more of heaven than the man who is prosperous merely in worldly things. For “godliness is profitable” to him in this life. He has food, and raiment, and shelter, and friendship, and character, and men bow respectfully to him—and that is enough.

Many a poor man goes along the street whose name would not be worth a snap on a note. He could not get a bank in New York to lend him a hundred dollars for a month. He is of no market value whatever. But if your dear child was dying, and you did not know how to pray, he is the very man that you would send for. You would say to him, when you were in distress, “Come to our house.” Ah! a man may not have outward prosperity, and yet prosper. He may have that which money cannot buy—peace, happiness, joy. The power of making joy he has; and is he not prospered? Is he not well off?

Finally, taking society at large, those who get the furthest from the rules of morality; those who have the most doubt and distrust in regard to the overruling providence of God; those who have a leaning to their own wisdom; those who are proud and selfish, and do what they have a mind to regardless of the welfare of others—they are not preëminently prosperous, even in material and commercial things. On the whole, looking through society collectively, that part of society which is most moral, which is most conformable to the Christian life, gives more instances of prosperity than any other—so many more as to be noteworthy. And I say to all the young in my congregation, “Do you suppose, if there be a God (and you scarcely can doubt that), he, being the Governor over this world, has made holiness of heart the law and duty of your life, and made the world so that this holiness of heart shall be uncongenial with success and run counter to it? Do you suppose that his laws are so ordained that prosperity will never follow obedience? Do you suppose he reverses in grace what he legislates in nature? No. The God who made the heaven and the earth, and governs them both, and will one day bring you into judgment, with all the nations of the earth—the quick and the dead—he has declared that *“Godliness is profitable unto all things; having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.”*

## PRAYER BEFORE THE SERMON.

We draw near to thee, our heavenly Father, with thanksgiving for thy mercies. Thou hast heard our prayer, and hast blessed the day. Thou hast drawn near to us, and caused us to draw near to thee. Thou has given us tokens of victory. Thou hast spread abroad in our hearts that spirit which brings forth love. And we have rejoiced in thee. We thank thee for that light which comes by faith and hope, which cheers us in our mortal course, which sheds abroad light upon our affection and upon every duty, and which makes the day, and even the darkness, light.

And now, O Lord, we desire, this evening, to make mention of thy goodness. We desire to be familiar with the humble boldness with which thou hast invited us to draw near to thee. Thou knowest our innermost wants—those which are most secreted, which no mortal eye can behold, and which we cannot tell to any though we would. All is open before thee. Yea, more plainly are we read by thee than we are recognized by ourselves. And we beseech of thee that thou wilt grant unto us, by thy Spirit, not the things supplicated, but the things needed. Guide our petitions day by day, that we may ask what we really need; that we may not plead our desires simply; that we may not mistake our own best good. May we be able, every day, to say, Thy will be done, and to accept the evolution of thy providence as an indication of thy will, and in all circumstances to find therein contentment. May we rejoice to believe that our life is in a school, and that thou art dealing with us both as a parent and as a teacher, and that we are learning by the things which we suffer, and by the things which we enjoy. And so may there be a meaning of life to us more than that which the world can give. Interpret to us thy dealings thus through our inward experience. May we learn patience, and hope, and faith, and perseverance. May we learn, from day to day, gentleness, and meekness, and forbearance one with another, and all humbleness of mind, as becomes those who are living upon God's forgiveness and mercy. And yet, while we are humble in view of our unworthiness, may we feel the exaltation and inspiration which there is in our petitions to thee as children, adopted into thy family, made heirs of the eternal blessedness of heaven, and in commerce with thee. May we lift up our heads. May we rejoice that nothing can harm us. Who shall separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus? More and more may we lay hold upon thy precious promises and assurances. More and more may we seek to make our life worthy of this relationship. Help us to overcome our easily-besetting sins. Help us to recognize the things in us which are vain, or proud, or selfish, or worldly, in any undue form. Help us rightly to live. May we be able to overcome evil. May we be able to strive against all things which defile, or which mar the purity of our spirit, so that thou mayest dwell with us. When we think what company thou must keep to dwell in us, we shrink at the boldness of asking thee to enter such hearts as ours. O grant that there may be in us courage of thought and nobility of soul. Be thou in us, so to elevate and establish us in all things which are good, that thou mayest be able to take complaisance in us.

We pray, O Lord our God, that thou wilt help us every day to remember our duty. May we cease to do the things which are harsh and pain-bearing. If it be thy will, may we seek, day by day, as good soldiers, to do the things which are most righteous. May we rejoice in rest and in ease when thou givest it to us; but may we willingly meet thy north-wind and thy winter, and bear hardness as good soldiers, when thou dost send them.

We pray that thou wilt grant thy blessing to rest upon any that are in

thy presence, severally, as thou seest that they need. We pray that thou wilt comfort those who need consolation. Enlighten those who are stumbling in darkness. Guide aright those who are uncertain of the way. Inspire with the beginnings of new life those who are dead in trespasses and in sins. Wilt thou grant that those who are discouraged, by many futile efforts, from living a better life, may gird up their loins again, and persevere to the end. Be with all those who are bearing the burdens of life, and exercised by its cares and responsibilities. May they seek everywhere to so carry themselves that they shall be worthy to wear the name of Christ.

Bless all the churches of this city. Wilt thou guard their interests. May their membership increase. Grant that their counsel in things good may be wise, and that they may be united more and more perfectly to each other. May thy kingdom come everywhere, under all forms. We pray for the advance of intelligence and justice and humanity. May the nations of the earth cease to contend. May they learn war no more. May force and violence perish. May the spirit of truth and equity prevail in all the earth, and thy name be glorified among thy people. And to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, shall be praises everlasting. *Amen.*

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#### PRAYER AFTER THE SERMON.

Our Father, we beseech of thee that thy blessing may rest upon the word spoken. Grant that we may have faith in thee and in thy promises. May we not be weary in well-doing. May we not distrust thee. May we trust in the Lord, and do good. Though the wicked seem to prosper, and though violence, and pride, and ravening and discontented avarice, seem to have their way, yet may we wait and see the frowning of thy providence beat down these usurpers. May we behold how, in the day and in the night, and in the periods through which thy plans run, thou art exalting the humble, and blessing the poor, and crowning with success those who are willing to be moderate in their desires, and making the happiness of the earth in its low places.

We pray, O Lord our God, that we may have faith to believe, not only in respect to the world to come, but in regard to the world that now is, that thou art administering for our good.

Bless the young. May they make no mistakes in the beginning of their life. May they take straight lines. May they walk in ways of righteousness. May they be truthful. May they be upright. May they be honorable before God, and in the sight of men. And we pray that they may not be deluded with a desire for sudden riches unearned. May we not seek to break into the house of fortune and get our robber-goods. May we be willing to sweat and toil, and strive, and wait for their prosperity, so that when it comes they shall be inured to it, and not ruined by it.

We beseech of thee that thou wilt convoy us safely through life. And when these mortal scenes shall pass, bring near the vision of the blessed land. And into it may we enter, not as by fire, but triumphing, met and greeted by those whom we have helped upon earth, and by those who have helped us in heaven, and by thee, O Father, Son and Spirit. *Amen.*

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